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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/816,203	03/23/2001	George Harry Hoffman	41556/04726	5827

22428 7590 10/20/2004

FOLEY AND LARDNER
SUITE 500
3000 K STREET NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20007

EXAMINER

ZEENDER, FLORIAN M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3627

DATE MAILED: 10/20/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/816,203

Applicant(s)

HOFFMAN ET AL.

Examiner

F. Ryan Zeender

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 May 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 5/19/2004, 8/11/2004
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

FC
10/14/04

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In each independent claim, paragraph "c", the terminology, "the independent franchise outlet" lacks proper antecedent basis in that it is not clear which of the plurality of outlets is being claimed.

In each independent claim, paragraph "e", it is not clear whether or not "surplus" refers to the same "surplus" claimed in paragraph "c" or not a separate distinct surplus of products.

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claims 2, 7, and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed,

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had possession of the claimed invention. The limitation that the computer auctions the products only to the outlets is not supported by the original specification.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shavit et al. '156 in view Garg '407 and Pathak (US2002/0016760A1).

Shavit et al. disclose, or inherently teach, the limitations of the claims including a supply chain management computer receiving data from a plurality of outlets of a supply chain utilizing a network (See for example Col. 2, lines 9-15; Col. 2, lines 32-36; Col. 8, lines 30-34); the data relating to sales of products (See for example Col. 6, line 35; Col. 6, lines 50-51; making product accessible to only the outlets, distributors, and suppliers using the network (See for example Col. 9, lines 44-68).

Shavit et al. lacks the specific teaching of data relating to products sold during a product promotion; the supply chain computer calculating a surplus based on forecast and current inventory; and auctioning surplus products using the network.

Garg teaches that it is well known to provide a computer for receiving data related to sales during a product promotion; generating a forecast of sales of the product during the product promotion (See for example, Col. 3, 1st paragraph);

calculating surplus based on forecast and current inventory (See for example Col. 4, lines 26-30).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Shavit et al. to receive data relating to products sold during a product promotion, and the supply chain computer calculating a surplus based on forecast and current inventory; in view of Garg; in order to obtain causal demand forecasts for inventory control (See for example Garg, Col. 3, lines 14-16).

Pathak teaches that it is well known for businesses to auction surplus products over a network.

It would have be further obvious to modify Shavit et al. to have the supply chain management computer auction surplus products using the network, in view of Pathak, in order to for the seller to increase revenue (See Pathak, paragraph 0027).

Further, it is well known in commerce that "franchise outlets" are often buyers/sellers of perishable food products and to use the system of Shavit et al. in a perishable food franchise business would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art in order to buy and sell the goods efficiently (See Shavit et al., Col. 1, line 61).

Re claims 5, 10, and 15, it would have been an obvious design choice, at the time of the invention, to one of ordinary skill in the art, to use the system/method in response to an outlet closing, as it is well known in the retail industry to use a variety of means/channels to sell inventory from a store that has gone bankrupt or is simply closing its doors.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to all claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to F. Ryan Zeender whose telephone number is (703) 308-8351. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Bob Olszewski can be reached on (703) 308-5183. The receptionist's phone number for the Technology center is (703) 308-1113.

The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

F. Zeender
Primary Examiner, A.U. 3627
October 13, 2004

 10/13/04
F. RYAN ZEENDER
PRIMARY EXAMINER